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Fear of Crime in the Republic of Ireland: Understanding its Origins and Consequences

Although individuals have been concerned about crime for centuries, ‘fear of crime’ is a relatively recent concept (see Emsley, 1987; Lee, 2007). The expression ‘fear of crime’ first began to appear in American newspapers during the 1930’s and was used to explain the public’s reaction to criminal behaviour. However, the term ‘fear of crime’ was not used in Europe until the early 1960’s. It was during this time that the development of victim surveys, and improvements in information gathering technologies, made data collection more manageable and the measurement of fear of crime¹ possible (see Lee, 2007). In this paper, the level of fear of crime in Ireland is explored as well as its impact on quality of life. First, the notion of ‘fear of crime’ is examined before moving on to discuss how fear of crime became an area of concern in Ireland. Next, the methods used to assess fear of crime in Ireland are described and the factors predicting the extent to which individuals’ fear of crime are identified. Following on from this, the possible impact of fear of crime on quality of life is investigated. Lastly, the potential relationship between victimisation and fear of crime is examined and the implications arising from the research findings are explored.

Defining ‘Fear of Crime’

Fear of crime is difficult to define as it can refer to a range of thoughts, emotions and beliefs regarding an individual’s vulnerability, that of their loved ones and the wider community (Ferraro, 1995). For example, fear of crime is usually taken to mean an individual’s fear of becoming a victim of crime (Gabriel and Greve, 2003; John Howard Society of Alberta, 1999; Maxfield, 1984). However, it can also refer to an individual’s concern about general crime levels, their beliefs regarding their risk of victimisation, and that of their loved ones, as well as an apprehension about the possible consequences of victimisation (Box, Hale and Andrews, 1988; Carrach and Mukherjee, 1999; Skogan, 1987; Warr, 1984). This diversity has resulted in fear of

¹ It is important to note that any measurement of fear of crime depends on an individual accurately acknowledging and reporting their fears. As such, these measurements tend to assess an individual’s reported fear of crime and may not take account of unconscious feelings of fear or fear which the individual does not wish to acknowledge. For this reason, the use of the term ‘fear of crime’ in this paper refers to an individual’s acknowledged and reported fear of crime.

crime being defined as “an emotional response of dread or anxiety to crime or symbols that a person associates with crime” (Ferraro: 1995: 4).

There are many factors which are believed to contribute to a fear of crime (see Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996; Lee, 2007). These include personal attributes, prior experience of victimisation, characteristics of the environment and wider social influences such as the media. Personal characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, geographical location and education have all been found to be related to fear of crime (Box et al. 1988; Chadee and Ditton, 2003; Clemente & Kleiman, 1976; Hough, 1995). More specifically, females, older adults, ethnic minority groups and individuals from urban locations tend to report a greater fear of crime than others (Box et al. 1988; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996).

An individual's perceptions of crime as a frequent occurrence may also result in feelings of fear as individuals believe they are ‘at risk’ of being victimised (Ferraro, 1995; Warr & Stafford, 1983). In particular, past experience of being a victim of crime may increase an individual's perception of being ‘at risk’ of future victimisation (Box et al. 1988; Skogan, 1987). However, the relationship between fear of crime and victimisation is not straightforward as while being a victim of crime may increase an individual's belief that they are at risk of being victimised, it may also reduce the perceived seriousness of victimisation (see Agnew, 1985; Winkel, 1998). In this way, variations in an individual's perceptions of the frequency and seriousness of criminal behaviour may explain differences in the level of fear they report.

In addition, research indicates that fear of crime can be influenced by characteristics of the environment and wider social processes (Ferraro, 1995; Heath & Petraitis, 1987; Skogan, 1986, 1990). Skogan (1986, 1990) suggests that a location's reputation for being prone to crime depends on the amount of criminal activity in that area and on various ‘signs of crime’. Signs of crime are features of the environment which increase an individual's perceived risk of victimisation (Skogan, 1990; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). Broken windows, graffiti, burned-out houses and/or cars, homelessness, beggars and ‘rowdy’ young people can act as signs of crime (Ferraro, 1995; Wilson, 1968; Wilson & Kelling, 1985). These signs of crime, combined with an area's reputation for being crime prone, are believed to indirectly influence fear of crime by heightening an individual's perceived risk of being victimised (LaGrange, Ferraro & Supancic, 1992).

Further, wider social processes can also shape an individual's perceptions of crime, their vulnerability and the consequences of criminal behaviour. For example, a growth in media technologies is believed to have contributed to a greater awareness of crime as well as a greater awareness of 'risk' amongst the public (Beck, 1992; Furedi, 2002; Lyng, 2005). This awareness of being 'at risk' is believed to have contributed to a culture of fear which encourages feelings of uncertainty and anxiety amongst the population (see Furedi, 2002). As such, fear of crime appears to be located within, and linked to, wider fears about employment, the family, security, health, finances, the state of the Government, etc. (Ewald, 2000; Taylor, 1996; Tulloch & Lupton, 2003; Walklate & Mythen, 2008). Consequently, Hollway and Jefferson (1997) suggest that some individuals may project their fears about wider, more difficult to control issues onto crime as crime appears actionable and potentially controllable. Accordingly, some individuals may report a fear of crime which stems from wider anxieties and/or feelings of vulnerability rather than their risk of being victimised or their prior experience of victimisation.

Fear of Crime in the Republic of Ireland

In Ireland, the past few decades have seen increasing attention being paid to crime and the impact of crime on Irish citizens. This in turn has prompted a greater awareness of crime and its effect amongst the general population (see Kilcommins, O'Donnell, O'Sullivan and Vaughan, 2004). In particular, a combination of factors in the 1980's and mid 1990's provided the catalyst for widespread anxiety about crime and crime control, which resulted in a greater attentiveness to issues such as fear of crime and its impact on quality of life.

In the early 1980's, Ireland experienced an economic recession which contributed to high levels of unemployment, emigration and poverty (see Laver, Mair and Sinnott, 1987). During this time, the economic recession, combined with the Troubles in Northern Ireland, prompted individuals to be more concerned with unemployment, inflation and Northern Ireland than domestic crime and crime control, despite rising crime figures (see Kilcommins et al. 2004). This led some commentators to state that Ireland remained a nation curiously unconcerned by crime in spite of an unprecedented rise in official recorded crime statistics (O'Donnell and O'Sullivan, 2003).

The majority of the Irish public seemed to remain unconcerned about crime until a series of events in the late 1980's and mid 1990's. During the late 1970's and 1980's, Ireland experienced a rise in the number of people using drugs, especially heroin, to such an extent that Dublin was believed to be experiencing an 'opiate epidemic' (see Dean, O'Hare, O'Connor, Kelly and Kelly, 1985; O'Mahony, 1993). Official crime statistics indicate that the number of burglaries, robberies and thefts increased significantly during this period and commentators suggested that these increases were associated with the growing number of drug addicts in Ireland and their need to fund their habit (see Charleton, 1995; O'Mahony and Guilmore, 1983). This led to feelings of disquiet amongst those living in urban locations, particularly Dublin, about the harm caused by drug use, as well as the lavish lifestyles of criminals involved in supplying drugs (see Kilcommmins et al. 2004; O'Donnell, 2007). These feelings of disquiet led to a number of protest marches in which community members demanded that drug dealers leave their local communities (see Charleton, 1995; Kilcommmins et al. 2004; Lyder, 2005; O'Donnell, 2007). This increase in drug abuse led to a general feeling of unease, against which events in the mid 1990's triggered widespread concern amongst the Irish public about crime and lawlessness (Kilcommmins et al. 2004; O'Donnell, 2007).

In the mid 1990's, a number of high profile killings occurred which demonstrated that crime was not only a problem for deprived urban areas but also for rural locations (see Kilcommmins et al. 2004; McCullagh, 1999). In particular, two high profile killings prompted a public outcry throughout Ireland. In June 1996 a member of An Garda Síochána², Garda Gerry McCabe, was shot dead during an attempted robbery in Adare, County Limerick and Veronica Guerin, an investigative journalist with the Sunday Independent, was murdered two weeks later. These events prompted an apprehensiveness amongst the public about crime and crime control and it was in this context that issues of crime and the public's fear of crime began to receive special attention (see Coulter, 7 July 2008; Kilcommmins et al. 2004; O'Donnell, 2007).

These killings also served to trigger widespread media coverage about crime and the effects of crime (see Coulter, 7 July 2008; Kilcommmins et al. 2004; O'Donnell, 2007). In particular, it was during this time that the media coverage of crime became more widespread and intense, providing more colourful descriptions of

² An Garda Síochána is the name of the Irish Police Force.

criminal behaviour than had been provided previously (see Coulter, 2008; O'Connell, 1999, 2002; O'Donnell and O'Sullivan, 2003). This led some to suggest that the media's portrayal of crime encouraged a fear of crime by contributing to an impression that crime had risen significantly over the previous decade (see Brown, 7 November 2007; Brown, 24 February 2008; Coulter, 7 July 2008; Kerrigan and Shaw, 18 April 1985; McCullagh, 1996). Indeed, a study investigating the Irish media's portrayal of crime found that the Irish public's perceptions of crime was not linked to official crime statistics but was instead associated with age, sex and newspaper readership (O'Connell and Whelan, 1996). Hence, this media coverage served to reflect and reinforce the public's concern about criminal activities and promoted the Government to focus on criminal justice matters (see Kilcommins et al. 2004; O'Donnell, 2007).

This focus on criminal justice issues also promoted a number of national surveys examining the nature and extent of crime, victimisation and fear of crime in Ireland (see Garda Research Unit 2002; Central Statistics Office, 1999; Watson, 2000).

Fear of Crime and Victimisation

Fear of crime is usually measured through survey research and, in Ireland, the Garda Public Attitudes Surveys and Crime and Victimisation Surveys are used to measure the level of fear of crime and victimisation experienced by the Irish public. Figures from the Central Statistics Office's (2007) Crime and Victimisation Survey indicate that levels of fear amongst the Irish public have remained relatively stable in the previous decade. The Crime and Victimisation Survey is part of the Quarterly National Household Survey which surveys 39,000 Irish households annually. A special module on Crime and Victimisation was included in the 1998, 2003 and 2006 Quarterly National Household Survey. Based on the results of these surveys, approximately 25 per cent of the Irish public were found to feel either unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark while seven per cent felt unsafe or very unsafe in their home alone at night (see Central Statistics Office, 1999, 2004, 2007).

Similar figures were also observed in the Garda Public Attitudes Surveys. The Garda Public Attitudes Survey is a nationwide survey investigating respondents'

attitudes and experiences of An Garda Síochána³, crime, fear of crime and the criminal justice system more generally. Since 2002, the Garda Public Attitudes Surveys have been conducted annually and, from 2005 onwards, they have consisted of a nationally representative sample of approximately 10,000 respondents (see Kennedy and Browne, 2006, 2007; O'Dwyer, Kennedy and Ryan, 2005). Results for the Garda Public Attitudes Surveys 2002-2006 indicate that 24-29 per cent of respondents felt either unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark while 41-54 per cent were worried about becoming a victim of crime (see Garda Research Unit, 2002; Kennedy and Browne, 2006, 2007; O'Dwyer et al. 2005; Sarma, 2003; Sarma and O'Dwyer, 2004).

As in other countries, females, older age groups and ethnic minorities tended to be more worried about becoming a victim of crime and to report feeling less safe (see Kennedy and Browne, 2006, 2007; O'Dwyer et al. 2005; Sarma and O'Dwyer, 2004; Walker, 2007). In addition, respondents from urban areas (other than Dublin) also tended to report lower feelings of safety walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark than those from more rural locations (see Kennedy and Browne, 2006, 2007).

These figures compare favourably with feelings of safety and fear of crime internationally, however, the Irish public's risk of victimisation was judged to be higher than most countries surveyed (see Van Dijk, Manchin, Van Kesteren, Nevala and Hideg, 2006; Van Dijk, Van Kesteren and Smit, 2007). This suggests that the relationship between the experience of victimisation and fear of crime is not straightforward.

Research in Ireland indicates that approximately six per cent of respondents aged 18 or over have been victimised in the previous year (see Kennedy and Browne, 2007). These victims were predominately male and in the 25-44 age category (Kennedy and Browne, 2007). The majority (84 per cent) were the victim of one crime, with domestic burglary, criminal damage and physical assault - excluding domestic and/or sexual assault - being the most common (Kennedy and Browne, 2007). Nevertheless, those most at risk of victimisation appear to be the least concerned about becoming a victim of crime.

³ An Garda Síochána is the Irish police force.

Figures from the Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Crime and Victimization Surveys indicate that those most at risk of crime (i.e. young adult males) tend to be the least likely to report a fear of crime. Instead, women and older age groups tend to acknowledge a greater fear of crime than males or respondents from younger age categories (see CSO, 2007; Watson, 2000). This may be due to the limitations involved in the use of survey research to measure fear of crime and/or a reluctance by male respondents to appear 'unmanly' by admitting feelings of vulnerability (see Sutton and Farrall, 2005). However, it is also possible that a fear of crime may reduce an individual's probability of becoming a victim of crime by encouraging individuals to avoid risky situations (see Boroora and Carcarch, 1997; Dubow et al. 1979; Ferraro, 1995; Watson, 2000). As such, it is unclear whether individuals who fear crime experience less victimisation due to the constrained lifestyles they adopt or whether they are the least likely to be victimised.

An examination of the effects of victimisation in Ireland suggests that being a victim of crimes is associated with reduced feelings of safety (see CSO, 1999, 2004, 2007; Watson, 2000). In her research, Watson (2000) found that being a victim of crime can result in a number of physical, financial and psychological effects. More specifically, the experience of victimisation can result in increased feelings of anxiety, loss of sleep, difficulty concentrating as well as a restriction of activities (see Watson, 2000). Being a victim of crime may also influence an individual's perception of crime as a social problem. According to Watson (2000), victims of crime tended to perceive the level of crime to be greater than the general population, with victims more likely to perceive teenagers hanging around in the streets, rubbish, litter and drug use to be very common problems (see Watson, 2000). Exposure to drug related problems has also been found to influence fear of crime, such that, individuals exposed to drug related problems tend to report a greater fear of crime (see Van Dijk et al. 2007). Being a victim of crime may, therefore, not only decrease feelings of safety but also lead to a reduction in quality of life as individuals attempt to restrict their activities in order to reduce their probability of being victimised.

Quality of life can also be both positively and negatively affected by fear of crime (Ferraro, 1995; Garofalo, 1981; Holloway and Jefferson, 1997; Patsios, 1999; Seefeldt, Malina and Clark, 2002). Positive consequences include encouraging individuals to engage in behaviours which attempt to reduce their risk of victimisation, increase their resistance to being victimised and minimise the potential

costs of victimisation (see DuBow, McCabe and Kaplan, 1979; Ferraro, 1995; Garofalo, 1981). In contrast, fear of crime may negatively affect quality of life by prompting individuals to severely restrict their activities, potentially reducing their physical, social and emotional well-being (see Holloway and Jefferson, 1997; Patsios, 1999; Seefeldt, Malina and Clark, 2002). However, the potential impact of fear of crime on quality of life can vary depending on an individual's age, gender and social circumstances (see Garofalo, 1981; Ferraro, 1995).

The Present Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the level of fear of crime in Ireland and its impact on quality of life. More specifically, the aims and objectives of this study are to:

- examine the extent to which individuals report a fear of crime in Ireland;
- ascertain the factors which influence stated levels of fear;
- assess the reported impact of fear of crime on quality of life;
- identify the factors influencing the effect of fear of crime on quality of life;
- and
- advance recommendations for the development of strategies and/or initiatives aimed at reducing fear of crime and its consequences.

The methods used to investigate fear of crime in Ireland and the research findings are presented in the following sections.

Methodology

Secondary data analysis of the 2007 Garda Public Attitudes Survey was conducted in order to identify the factors predicting fear of crime in Ireland and its impact on quality of life. The raw data for 2007 Garda Public Attitudes Survey was examined as the Garda Public Attitudes Surveys are conducted annually and the 2007 data was the most up-to-date data available.

Sample

The 2007 Garda Public Attitudes Survey consisted of a nationally representative sample of 10,067 respondents. Respondents were voluntarily recruited across the Republic of Ireland using a random cluster sampling framework. Of these

respondents, 4,916 (48.8 per cent) were male and 5,151 (51.2 per cent) were female. All respondents ranged in age from 18 years to over 65 years and came from a range of both urban and rural locations. Respondents were predominantly Irish with a working or lower middle class socio-economic status, some form of secondary school education and were employed or in further education/training at the time of completing the survey (see Table 1).

Table 1: Garda Public Attitudes Survey 2007 Sample Demographics

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age Group: 18-24yrs	1,402	13.9
25-44yrs	4,154	41.3
45-64yrs	3,045	30.2
65+yrs	1,458	14.5
Unknown	8	0.1
Nationality: Irish	9,225	91.6
English/ British	286	2.8
Other EU	304	3.0
Non EU	238	2.4
Unknown	14	0.1
Education: No Education/ Primary Only	933	
Secondary Education	6,157	61.1
Non-Degree Qualification	842	8.4
Primary Degree or Higher	2,005	19.9
Unknown	130	1.3
Socio-Economic Status: Upper Middle/ Middle	805	8.0
Lower Middle	3,051	30.3
Skilled Working	2,277	22.6
Other Working	2,191	21.8
Lowest subsistence level	105	1.0
Farmer >50 acres	554	5.5
Farmer < 50 acres	230	2.3
Unknown	855	8.4
Employment Status: Unemployed/ Not Working	582	5.8
Domestic Duties	1,244	12.4
Further Education/ Training	601	6.0
Working Part-time	981	9.7
Working Full-time	5,298	52.6
Retired	1,267	12.6
Unknown	94	0.9
Locality: Dublin City	2,035	20.2
Other City (Cork, Galway, Limerick, Waterford)	935	9.3
Town (10,000 – 40,000 population)	1,112	11.0
Town (1,000 – 10,000 population)	1,636	16.3
Village/ Rural/ Open Country	3,901	38.8
Unknown	448	4.5

Measurement

Similar to other surveys, fear of crime was measured in the 2007 Garda Public Attitudes Survey by asking respondents whether they were worried about becoming a victim of crime and to rate how safe they feel in their neighborhood and at home alone after dark (see the British Crime Survey, Northern Ireland Crime Survey and the International Crime and Victimization Survey). However, as questions about how safe participants feel in their home/neighbourhood after dark have been criticised for over-inflating levels of fear (e.g. Farrall, Bannister, Ditton & Gilchrist, 1997; Farrall & Gadd, 2003; Hale, 1996; Sutton & Farrall, 2005), fear of crime was measured solely on the extent to which respondents reported a fear of becoming a victim of crime.

Respondents were asked 'Do you worry that you might become a victim of crime?' to which they responded either 'Yes' or 'No'. If they responded 'Yes' they were then asked to state which of the following crimes they were worried about: rape; being mugged/robbed; physical attack by a stranger; being pestered/insulted in a public place; being subjected to a racist attack; burglary; car theft; having items stolen from their car; and having their property vandalised.

Respondents were also asked to rate to how much their fear of crime affected their quality of life on a five point likert scale ranging from 'greatly reduced quality of life' to 'no effect on quality of life'.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage tables were used to explore the extent to which respondents reported being worried about becoming a victim of crime, the type of crimes they feared and the impact of this fear on their quality of life.

Following on from this, a multinomial logistic regression analysis was used to investigate the factors associated with individuals experiencing a fear of crime and the extent to which this fear impacted on their quality of life. In this research, the extent to which respondents feared crime and its impact on their quality of life was divided into three categories: a did not fear crime category; a feared crime but did not reduce quality of life category; and a feared crime which resulted in a moderate, significant or greatly reduced quality of life category. Multi-nominal regression analysis was used as it is a form of regression analysis which is specifically designed for use with a nominal/ordinal dependent variable which contains more than two categories. In the

multinomial regression analysis, the impact of the following factors was explored: demographic information; official burglary crime rates by Garda Division⁴; prior experience of victimisation; perceptions of crime in local area; and satisfaction with An Garda Síochána. The regression results presented in this paper are based on the final regression model in which all non-significant factors have been removed.

Fear of Crime and its Impact on Quality of Life

Approximately 36.5 per cent of respondents (n=3,671) stated they were worried about becoming a victim of crime. In particular, these respondents were worried about burglary (89 per cent), being mugged/robbed (82.3 per cent), having their property vandalised (82 per cent), being physically attacked by a stranger (78.8 per cent), having their car stolen (74.5 per cent) and having items stolen from their car (71.9 per cent).

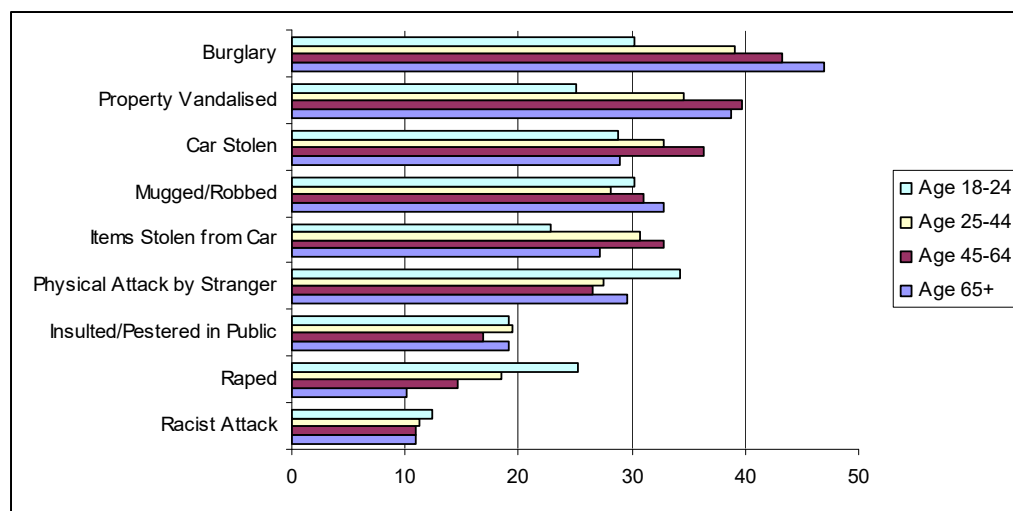
These individuals seemed to be less concerned about being pestered/insulted in a public place (52.6 per cent), rape (43.1 per cent) or racist attacks (26.1 per cent). However, these figures may underestimate minority communities concerns about racist attacks as the majority of respondents were Irish nationals and, as such, are unlikely to be victims of a racist attack. Amongst, non-Irish and non-British respondents, 54 per cent feared racist attacks⁵.

The age and gender of respondents also appeared to influence the types of crimes they feared as more females were worried about rape (23.8 per cent compared to 4 per cent of males) while older respondents were worried about property crime and younger respondents worried about violent crime (see Figure 1).

⁴ In 2007, there were 25 different Garda Divisions within An Garda Síochána. As the official crime rates for a number of different crimes were highly correlated ($r = 0.7$ and above), only the official crime rate for burglary was included in the regression analysis to avoid multicollinearity.

⁵ Respondents' ethnicity was not recorded in the 2007 Garda Public Attitudes Survey. For this reason, nationality is used as a proxy measure of ethnicity.

Figure 1: Percentage Fearing Crime by Age Group and Crime Type



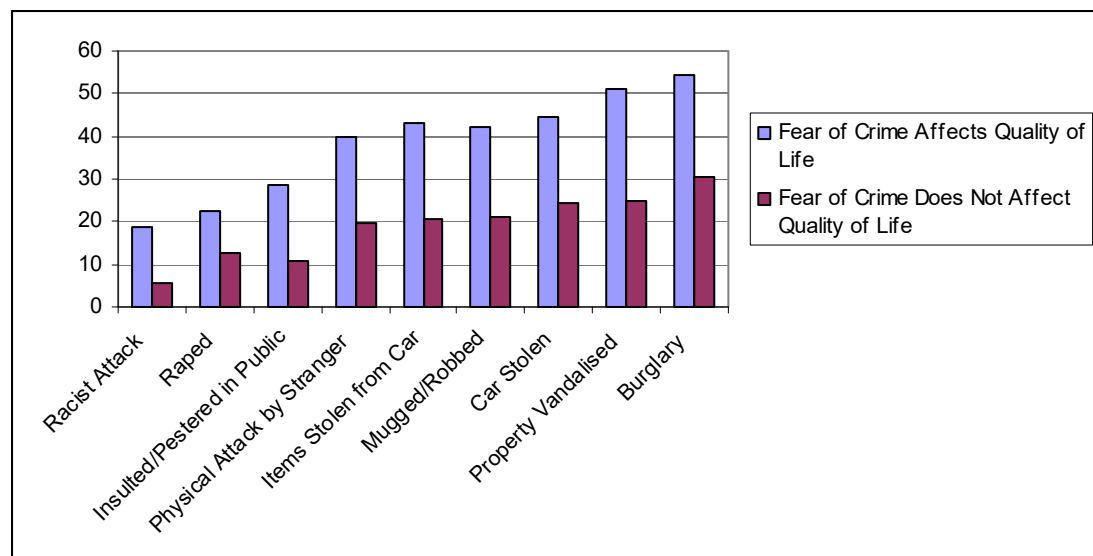
This implies that variables such as age and gender may predict the extent to which individuals fear crime in Ireland.

Impact on Quality of Life

Of those who feared crime, 70.5 per cent (n=2,588) stated that their fear of crime affected their quality of life. Responses to this question were re-categorised into two groups consisting of those whose quality of life was moderately, significantly or greatly reduced and those whose fear of crime had no affect on their quality of life or reduced their quality of life a little. Amongst those reporting a fear of crime, 41.1 per cent stated that their fear of crime moderately significantly or greatly reduced their fear of crime while 55.4 per cent felt that their quality of life was not reduced or only reduced a little. The remainder did not know how much their fear of crime affected their quality of life. Accordingly, 63 per cent of all respondents did not fear crime while 21.5 feared crime but it did not reduce their quality of life and 15 per cent feared crime and this fear moderately, significantly or greatly reduced their quality of life.

Almost twice as many individuals who reported a reduced quality of life were very worried crime compared to those whose fear of crime did not affect their quality of life (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage Very Worried by Crime Type and Impact on Quality of Life



In addition, fear of crime appeared to have a greater impact on quality of life for females compared to males with 42.4 per cent of females stating their quality of life was moderately, significantly or greatly reduced compared to 38.9 per cent of males. Similarly, fear of crime appeared to have a greater impact on quality of life for respondents aged 65 or above than respondents aged 18-24, as 47.6 per cent of those aged 65 or above stated that their quality of life was moderately, significantly or greatly reduced compared to 34 per cent of those aged 18-24.

As with fear of crime, these findings suggest that variables such as age and gender can influence the extent to which individuals fear crime and its impact on quality of life.

Factors Predicting Fear of Crime and Reduced Quality of Life

In order to identify the factors influence respondents fear of crime and the impact of this fear on quality of life, a multinomial regression analysis was used. The reference group for the multinomial logistic regression analysis was those respondents who did not report a fear of crime. The results presented in this section are based on the final regression model which was found to significantly predict fear of crime ($p < .001$) and accounted for 20.2 per cent of the total variance to be explained. A number of factors were identified as significantly predicting whether individuals feared crime and its impact on quality of life including: demographic variables; official burglary crime

rates by Garda Division; perceptions of local criminal activity; prior experience of victimisation; and satisfaction with An Garda Síochána (see Table 1).

Table 1: Odds Ratios for Fear of Crime and Impact on Quality of Life

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Fear Crime But Does Not Affect Quality of Life</i>	<i>Fear Crime And Affects Quality of Life</i>
Gender (reference = Male)		
Female	1.81***	2.39***
Age (reference = 25-44)		
18-24	0.97	0.66***
45-64	1.10	1.06
65+	1.35**	1.54***
Nationality (reference = Irish)		
British	0.78	0.86
Other EU	0.66*	0.89
Non-EU	0.48***	1.09
Socio-Economic Status (reference = Lower Middle)		
Upper Middle/Middle	1.05	0.74*
Skilled Working	0.93	1.11
Other Working	0.85*	1.02
Lowest Subsistence Level	0.66	0.81
Farmer	0.80	0.78
Missing	0.78*	0.71*
Marital Status (reference = Married/Cohabiting)		
Single	0.86*	1.07
Separated/Divorced	1.13	1.17
Widowed	0.88	1.41**
Education (reference = Upper Secondary)		
No Qualifications/Primary only	1.16	1.44**
Lower Secondary	0.92	1.23*
Non-Degree Qualification	1.20	0.83
Degree or Higher	1.18*	1.01
Employment Status (reference = Working Full-Time)		
Unemployed/Not Working	1.14	1.33*
Domestic Duties	1.18	1.19
Further Education/Training	1.33*	1.21
Working Part-Time	1.26*	0.99
Retired	1.05	1.32*
Locality (reference = Town 10-40K pop.)		
Dublin City	0.66***	0.90
Other City	1.19	1.29*
Town (1-10K pop.)	0.73**	0.88
Village/Countryside	0.91	1.09

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

Table 1: Odds Ratios for Multinomial Regression Analysis Cont'd.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Fear Crime But Does Not Affect Quality of Life</i>	<i>Fear Crime And Affects Quality of Life</i>
Crime Rates by Garda Division		
Burglary per 1,000 pop.	0.96***	0.98*
Perceived Change in Crime (reference = Staying the Same/Decreasing) Increasing	1.53***	3.27***
Perceive Youth Crime as Problem (reference = No) Yes	1.13	1.34**
Perceive Public Nuisance as Problem (reference = No) Yes	1.07	1.40***
Perceive Property Crime as Problem (reference = No) Yes	1.24***	1.39***
Victim of a Racist Attack (reference = No) Yes	2.23***	2.95***
Recent Victim of a Crime (reference = No)		
Personal Victimization	1.47***	2.41***
Household Victimization	1.52**	2.04***
Both	1.71	3.46***
Satisfaction with Garda Visibility (reference = Very Satisfied/Satisfied) Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied	1.48***	1.72***
Garda Satisfaction Overall (reference = Very Satisfied/Satisfied) Dissatisfied/Very Dissatisfied	1.33***	1.88***

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

A number of factors appeared to increase an individual's probability of experiencing a fear of crime including their gender, age, history of victimisation and perceptions of local criminality and Garda performance. However, there were also a number of factors which seemed to distinguish between those whose fear of crime affected their quality of life and those whose fear of crime did not moderately, significantly or greatly reduce their quality of life.

Demographic Information

Based on the regression results, a number of demographic variables influenced the extent to which individuals feared crime and the impact of this fear on their quality of life. For instance, females and those aged 65 or above were more likely to fear crime compared to males and those aged 25-44. However, other EU and non-EU nationals

were less likely to report that their fear of crime did not affect their quality of life compared to Irish nationals (odds ratio of 0.66 and 0.48 respectively). An individual's age, gender and nationality may, therefore, play an important role in influencing their probability of experiencing a fear of crime and/or a reduced quality of life.

An individual's socio-economic status and marital status also appeared to influence the extent to which they feared crime and the effect of this fear on their quality of life. Individuals from an upper middle/middle socio-economic status were less likely to state that their quality of life was affected by their fear of crime while other working socio-economic status respondents were less likely to report that their fear of crime did not affect their quality of life (odds ratio of 0.74 and 0.85 respectively). In contrast, those whose socio-economic status was unknown seemed to be less likely to fear crime (odds ratio of 0.78) and to experience a reduced quality of life (odds ratio of 0.71). Widowers were also more likely to report that their fear of crime affected their quality of life (odds ratio of 1.41) while single respondents were less likely to report that their fear of crime did not reduce their quality of life (odds ratio of 0.86). Accordingly, widowers were more likely to report a reduced quality of life while those from an upper middle/middle socio-economic status were less likely to state that their fear of crime affected their quality of life

Similarly, education level and employment status was also associated with fear of crime and a reduced quality of life. Individuals with no formal/primary education and a lower secondary education were more likely to report a reduced quality of life (odds ratio of 1.44 and 1.23 respectively) while those educated to degree level or higher were more likely to report that their quality of life was not affected by their fear of crime (odds ratio of 1.18). Unemployment individuals and those who were not working were also more likely to report that their quality of life was affected by fear of crime as were those who were retired (odds ratio of 1.33 and 1.32 respectively). In comparison, those engaged in further education/training and/or working part-time were more likely to fear crime but state that this fear of crime did not moderately, significantly or greatly reduce their quality of life (odds ratio of 1.33 and 1.26 respectively). Hence, unemployed, not working and retired individuals were more likely to experience a reduced quality of life while those educated to degree level, engaged in further education/training and working part-time were less likely to state that their quality of life was affected by fear of crime.

In addition, the type of area in which the individual resided seemed to affect their probability of reporting a fear of crime and/or a reduced quality of life. Individuals living in Dublin city and smaller towns (population between 1,000 and 10,000) appeared to be less likely to fear of crime (odds ratio of 0.66 and 0.73 respectively) while those living in cities other than Dublin were more likely to report that their fear of crime affected their quality of life (odds ratio of 1.29).

These findings suggest that demographic information such as age, gender, nationality etc. can be used to identify those individuals most at risk of experiencing a fear of crime which moderately, significantly or greatly reduces their quality of life.

Crime in Local Area

Official crime rates and perceptions of local criminal activity also influenced fear of crime and its impact on quality of life. The official burglary crime rate per 1,000 population was found to significantly influence fear of crime and its affect on quality of life (odds ratio of 0.96 and 0.98 respectively). As the official crime rates for murder, theft, drug offences, burglary and assault were highly correlated ($r = 0.7$ or above), only the official crime rate for burglary was included in the regression analysis. Interestingly, as burglary rates increased, an individuals probability of experiencing a fear of crime slightly decreased, suggesting that living in an area with a high crime rate for burglary may lead to a perceived normalisation of crime. Consequently, living in an area with a high crime rate for burglary may lead to a perception that crime is a normal occurrence, potentially reducing the perceived seriousness of crime and, in this way, an individual's fear of crime.

Respondents' perceptions of crime as a problem in their locality also influenced their fear of crime and its impact on quality of life. Individuals believing that crime in their area had increased were more likely to fear crime and were especially likely to state that their fear of crime reduced their quality of life (odds ratio of 1.53 and 3.27 respectively). Similarly, those who believed that property crime was a problem in their locality were more likely to fear crime than those who did not and were also more likely to report that their fear of crime affected their quality of life (odds ratio of 1.24 and 1.39 respectively). However, individuals who believed that youth crime and public nuisance were a problem where they lived were especially at risk of experiencing a reduced quality of life due to their fear of crime (odds ratio of 1.34 and 1.40 respectively). Accordingly, perceptions of an increase in local crime, as

well as a belief that property crime, youth crime and public nuisance are a problem in one's locality, can increase an individual's probability of developing a fear of crime and experiencing a reduced quality of life.

These findings indicate that perceptions of crime in one's local area, as well as official crime rates, can influence fear of crime and its impact on quality of life. In addition, these results demonstrate the importance of perceptions for influencing fear of crime and its affect on quality of life regardless of official crime rates.

Experience of Victimisation

Another factor found to significantly predict the extent to which individuals feared crime and its affect on their quality of life was their previous experience of being a victim of crime and/or a racist incident.

Individuals who had previously been the victim of a crime were more likely to fear crime and were especially at risk of reporting a reduced quality of life (odds ratio of 1.47 and 2.41 respectively). Similarly, individuals reporting that a member of their household had been the victim of a crime were also more likely to fear crime and to state that this fear affected their quality of life (odds ratio of 1.52 and 2.04 respectively). However, individuals who had prior experience of being both a victim of crime and having a household member who had been a victim of crime were almost three and half times more likely to report that their fear of crime moderately, significantly or greatly reduced their quality of life (odds ratio of 3.46). In addition, individuals who had previously been the victim of a racist attack were more likely to fear crime and to report that their quality of life was affected by this fear (odds ratio of 2.23 and 2.95 respectively).

Prior experience of a racist incident, personal victimisation, household victimisation and/or both are, therefore, associated with individuals reporting a fear of crime and experiencing a reduced quality of life due to this fear.

Satisfaction with An Garda Síochána

Lastly, respondents' level of satisfaction with An Garda Síochána significantly predicted whether they feared crime and the extent to which this fear affected their quality of life.

Individuals who were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the level of visibility provided by An Garda Síochána were more likely to fear crime and to state

that this fear reduced their quality of life than those who were satisfied or very satisfied with Garda visibility (odds ratio of 1.48 and 1.72 respectively). Similarly, those who were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the overall performance of An Garda Síochána were more likely to fear crime and to report that this fear of crime affected their quality of life than those who were satisfied/very satisfied with the overall performance of An Garda Síochána (odds ratio of 1.33 and 1.88 respectively). Accordingly, feelings of satisfaction with Garda visibility and performance are associated with a lower probability of experiencing a fear of crime while feelings of dissatisfaction are associated with a higher probability of experiencing a fear of crime and a reduced quality of life.

It seems, therefore, that females, individuals aged 65 or above, prior experience of victimisation, dissatisfaction with An Garda Síochána, a perception of property crime as a local problem and a belief that the level of local crime has increased is associated with a fear of crime and reduced quality of life. In particular, widowers, individuals with no formal/primary only or lower secondary level education are especially likely to report that their quality of life has been affected by their fear of crime, as are those who are unemployed/not working, retired and living in a city other than Dublin. Individuals who perceive youth crime and public nuisance to be a problem in their locality are also more likely to report a reduced quality of life. In contrast, individuals living in an area with a higher official crime rate for burglary, Dublin city and/or smaller towns were less likely to fear crime while upper middle/middle socio-economic status individuals and those with a degree or higher were less likely to report that their quality of life was affected by their fear of crime.

Discussion

Based on these results, there are a number of factors which are associated with a higher probability of experiencing a fear of crime. In particular, victims of crime, females, individuals aged 65 or above, those engaged in domestic duties and those who are dissatisfied with An Garda Síochána are more likely to fear crime. In addition, individuals' perceptions of crime can also influence their fear of crime, with individuals believing youth crime, public nuisance and property crime to be a problem in their locality experiencing a greater probability of developing a fear of crime than those who do not. In contrast, individuals aged 18-24, farmers, those whose socio-economic status is unknown and residents of Dublin city and small towns are less

likely to fear crime, as are those who are very satisfied with An Garda Síochána and believe crime in their locality has decreased or remained the same. These findings correspond to international research which has also found that age, gender, experience of victimisation and perceptions of crime can influence fear of crime (see Box et al. 1988; Ferraro, 1995; Hale, 1996).

Age has been found to influence fear of crime in numerous international studies (e.g. Box et al. 1988; Ferraro, 1995; French and Campbell, 2002; Hale, 1996; Hough, 1995). Older adults have been found to report a greater fear of crime than younger age groups despite being at less risk of victimisation (Clemente and Kleiman, 1976; Box et al. 1988; Hale, 1996). This has become known as the fear/risk paradox as most crime statistics indicate that younger individuals, particularly male teenagers and young adults, are most at risk of being a victim of crime (Lindquist and Duke, 1982; Cook and Cook, 1976; Ferraro, 1995). Indeed, this has led some researchers to question the ‘rationality’ of this fear, implying that fear of crime is more of a ‘problem’ for older adults than crime itself (Clemente and Kleiman, 1976, 1977; Jaycox, 1978; Lindquist and Duke, 1982). However, older adults may be more likely to report a fear of crime as the potential physical, psychological and economical consequences of crime may be more serious for older adults than younger adults. In addition, Irish media coverage of stories in which older adults are physically attacked may increase their perceptions of being at risk of serious criminal activity and, in this way, increase their fear of crime (Coutler, 2008; McCullagh, 1998; O’Donnell, 2007). Further research is, therefore, required to identify why older adults are more likely to fear crime, while those aged 18-24 are less likely to fear crime despite their greater probability of becoming a victim of crime.

International research has also found that females are more likely to fear crime due to their concerns about being sexually assaulted and/or abused by significant others as well as their feelings of vulnerability (see Ferraro, 1996; Killias, 1990; Stanko, 1990, Warr, 1985). Females’ concerns about being sexually assaulted and/or abused are believed to heighten their fears of other types of crimes by decreasing feelings of safety (Stanko, 1990; Ferraro, 1996). However, while a greater proportion of females than males in this study feared becoming a victim of rape, females expressed a slightly greater fear of crime across all types of crime. While it is possible that males may under-report their fear of crime (see Goodey, 1997; Sutton and Farrall, 2005), further research is needed to identify why females report a greater fear of

crime than males. In-depth qualitative research is required to identify whether Irish females experience a greater fear of crime due to an under-reporting by males, concerns about their ability to deal with these situations and/or their experiences of abuse.

In addition, victimisation has also been found to influence fear of crime, such that, individuals who have previously been victimised are more likely to fear crime than those who have not been victimised (Skogan, 1987; Box, et al. 1988). However, the relationship between fear of crime and victimisation has not been straightforward (see Agnew, 1985). For example, research by Winkel (1998) suggests that victimisation can increase an individual's belief that they are at risk of being victimised but it may also reduce the perceived seriousness of victimisation. Nevertheless, in this research, being a victim of crime increased an individual's fear of crime, corresponding to previously studies in Ireland which suggested that being a victim of crime is associated with reduced feelings of safety (see CSO, 1999, 2004, 2007; Watson, 2000).

Interestingly, the relationship between official crime rates for criminal damage and fear of crime indicates that the relationship between 'signs of crime' and fear of crime may be more complex than initially theorised. According to Skogan (1986, 1990) a location's reputation for being prone to crime depends on the amount of criminal activity in that area and various 'signs of crime'. Signs of crime include features of the environment which increase an individual's perceived risk of victimisation, such as broken windows, graffiti, burned-out houses and/or cars, 'rowdy' young people, etc. (Ferraro, 1995; Wilson, 1968; Wilson & Kelling, 1985). While, higher official crime rates and perceptions of youth crime as a local problem are associated with a fear of crime, this research found that higher official crime rates for criminal damage lowered an individual's probability of experiencing a fear of crime. Having said this, being the victim of criminal damage increased fear of crime. This finding suggests that living in an area in which criminal damage is more prevalent may decrease fear of crime but personal experience of being the victim of criminal damage can increase an individual's fear of crime.

These results, therefore, imply that attempts to reduce fear of crime should be targeted at those most at risk of developing a fear of crime, such as victims of crime, females, individuals aged 65 or over and those living in areas prone to personal theft and murder.

Impact of Fear of Crime on Quality of Life

Of those who feared crime, 41 per cent (n=1,507) stated that their fear of crime moderately, significant or greatly reduced their quality of life, which amounted to roughly 15 per cent of the total number of individuals surveyed. As with fear of crime, a number of factors were associated with individuals reporting a reduced quality of life including: age; gender; nationality; socio-economic status; marital status; education; official crime rates, experience of victimisation; perceptions of local crime; and satisfaction with An Garda Síochána. In particular, females, non-EU nationals, widowers, those aged 65 or above, individuals with no formal, primary or lower secondary education, victims of robbery/assault and those living in an area prone to drug offences and personal theft were more likely to report a reduced quality of life.

These results are similar to studies conducted in other countries which have found that fear of crime tends to have a substantial (usually negative) effect on the quality of life of females, older adults, victims of crime and those exposed to a higher risk of victimisation (see French and Freel, 2008; Mirrlees-Black and Allen, 1998; Stafford, Chandola and Marmot, 2007). In addition, the percentage of individuals stating that their fear of crime moderately or greatly reduced their quality of life was similar to that in Northern Ireland and England and Wales (see French and Freel, 2008; Nicholas, Kershaw and Walker, 2007).

The results of this analysis also indicate that there are a number of similarities between those who fear crime and those whose fear reduces their quality of life. According to the regression results, females, those aged 65 or above and individuals living in an area with a higher crime rate for personal theft are more likely to fear crime and feel their quality of life is moderately, significantly or greatly reduced. Similarly, those believing that youth crime is a major problem in their area and who are dissatisfied with An Garda Síochána are more likely to fear crime and report that their quality of life affected by this fear. In contrast, individuals age 18-24 are less likely to fear crime and less likely to state that this fear reduced their quality of life. Individuals believing that the level of crime in their area has remained the same are also less likely to fear crime and report a reduced quality of life. There are, however, a number of factors which appear to distinguish between those whose quality of life is reduced by their fear of crime and those whose quality of life is not reduced.

Factors such as nationality, marital status, the official crime rate for drug offences and perceptions of local crime seem to differentiate between those stating that their quality of life is reduced by their fear of crime and those who do not. Non-EU nationals, widowers, individuals with no formal/primary or lower secondary level education, individuals living in an area prone to drug offences and those who perceive car crime and violent crime to be a problem in their locality are more likely to report a reduced quality of life. In particular, non-EU nationals are almost three times more likely to experience a reduced quality of life due to their fear of crime while widowers are almost twice as likely to experience a reduced quality of life. This suggests that interventions attempting to reduce the impact of fear of crime on quality of life should pay particular attention to non-EU nationals and widowers as well as victims of robbery/assault, females, individuals aged 65 or above, those living in areas prone to drug offences and personal theft and those perceiving youth crime, violent crime and car crime to be problems in their local area.

It would, therefore, seem possible to develop targeted cost-effective interventions aimed at reduce fear of crime and its impact on quality on life by focusing on those most at risk of developing a fear of crime and experiencing a reduced quality of life.

Reducing Fear of Crime and its Impact on Quality of Life

Based on these findings, a number of recommendations for strategies and/or initiatives aimed at reducing fear of crime and its impact on quality of life can be recommendation. These include initiatives and/or strategies focused on official crime levels, the experience of victimisation, perceptions of local crime and individual characteristics.

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